

situated in opposite hemispheres, as, for example, Lombardy bordered by the Alps, and Lower Peru inclosed between the Pacific and the Cordillera of the Andes, afford striking proofs of the justness of this assertion.

Till the middle of the last century, the mountains round the valleys of Aragua were covered with forests. Great trees of the families of mimosa, ceiba, and the fig-tree, shaded and spread coolness along the banks of the lake. The plain, then thinly inhabited, was filled with brushwood, interspersed with trunks of scattered trees and parasite plants, enveloped with a thick sward, less capable of emitting radiant caloric than the soil that is cultivated and consequently not sheltered from the rays of the sun. With the destruction of the trees, and the increase of the cultivation of sugar, indigo, and cotton, the springs, and all the natural supplies of the lake of Valencia, have diminished from year to year. It is difficult to form a just idea of the enormous quantity of evaporation which takes place under the torrid zone, in a valley surrounded with steep declivities, where a regular breeze and descending currents of air are felt towards evening, and the bottom of which is flat, and looks as if levelled by the waters. It has been remarked, that the heat which prevails throughout the year at Cura, Guacara, Nueva Valencia, and on the borders of the lake, is the same as that felt at midsummer in Naples and Sicily. The mean annual temperature of the valleys of Aragua is nearly 25.5° ; my hygrometrical observations of the month of February, taking the mean of day and night, gave 71.4° of the hair hygrometer. As the words great drought and great humidity have no determinate signification, and air that would be called very dry in the lower regions of the tropics would be regarded as humid in Europe, we can judge of these relations between climates only by comparing spots situated in the same zone. Now at Cumana, where it sometimes does not rain during a whole year, and where I had the means of collecting a great number of hygrometric observations made at different hours of the day and night, the mean humidity of the air is 86° ; corresponding to the mean temperature of 27.7° . Taking into account the influence of the rainy months, that is to say, estimating the difference observed in other parts